

Gorges Greyhounds Fostering Basics

We think it's important to place every rescued greyhound in a foster home before adoption. We want to be confident that we can tell prospective adopters what an individual dog is going to be like. Things like:

- How is he with stairs? With screen doors?
- Is she cat friendly?
- How is he with other greyhounds and other dogs?
- How is she when left alone?
- Is he crate trained?
- Is she house trained?
- How does he react to loud noises or sudden movement?
- On a related topic, what about interactions with children?
- How does she behave when on a leash?

We'll have the best picture if our fostering practices are consistent. That way, no matter who did the fostering, we'll all be speaking the same language.

With that in mind, here are our expectations. The reasoning behind these expectations is that we want to prepare our foster dogs for whatever rules their future owner wants to put in place. So, basically, no spoiling the fosters!

- Eat in his crate.
- Sleep in his crate.
- Put in his crate whenever there are no humans in the house, and even when there are no humans in the same part of the house.
- His crate cannot be in a bedroom.
- Not allowed on any furniture, even if other pets are allowed.
- Fed only dog food and dog treats. No people snacks.
- Always on a leash or in a securely fenced area when outdoors.
- Don't muzzle your foster when he's outside, unless you're making introductions to an unfamiliar dog.
- No dog park!

A well-fostered dog will

- Go into his crate willingly.
- Be reliably housebroken.
- Pee and poop while on a leash.
- Tolerate being bathed.
- Tolerate having toenails clipped.
- Tolerate being brushed or combed.
- Tolerate (or enjoy!) getting in the car and going for short drives.

Crate philosophy

Crates are a good thing. They are a safe place, a quiet place. Never use the crate as a punishment. Feeding your foster in his crate will give him a reason to like it, and will help you avoid any territory issues with your other pets.

Leave the crate door open during the day. You may find your foster going in voluntarily during quiet times. (You can help by occasionally throwing a treat in there.)

Introductions to other dogs

Leashes on both dogs, in neutral territory. (If they're both Greyhounds, you can start with muzzles as well.) Err on the side of caution. Watch the body language. There's a big difference between

- excitement: ears up, tail up and maybe wagging, eager whining noises, a nervous jittering of the feet

and

- aggression/fear: tail down and tucked!, lips pulled back, ears flat.

Don't push too hard. If the dogs are uncomfortable, separate them, tell them both that they're wonderful, and try again later. If their behavior is good and you're in a fenced area, keep the muzzles on and let both dogs off leash. If they still play nicely, you can remove the muzzles and stay close.

When all of that has gone well, it's time to try it in the other dog's territory, like his house. Repeat all the steps listed above. This may be more caution than is needed, but we really prefer the better safe than sorry approach.

Introductions to cats

Always always always indoors. A Greyhound who is completely cat-friendly indoors may behave completely differently outdoors.

Your foster should be muzzled and held by the collar. Bring the cat to the dog, rather than having the dog approach the cat. Let the cat sniff or leave. Watch the dog's behavior. Interested is okay. Fixated is not. If the cat leaves immediately, try again later, but not right away. You want the cat to be as calm as possible.

Keep the dog muzzled and leashed whenever the cat is around. For how long? Until you are completely satisfied that it's safe, then two days longer! Next, leave her muzzle on, but let her off leash when the cat is around. Supervise closely! Again, when you've seen lots of examples of good behavior and NO examples of trouble, you can remove the muzzle.

But no matter how comfortable you are with their interactions, do not ever leave your foster alone with your cat if you're not there to supervise. Ever. Seriously.

Summary

Keep your copy of ***Retired Racing Greyhounds for Dummies*** close at hand.

Call us if you have any questions or worries! We all want your fostering experience to be fun for both of you, so the Grey will get placed in a wonderful home, and so we can ask you to foster another dog! 607-257-6104 or Allison@gorgesgreyhounds.org

Thanks for all your help. These beautiful dogs couldn't get to where they belong without you.